

THE STAR'S

STATION  
WEEK  
COMPUTING & HIGH TECH  
NO

### Computer Companies

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### Raster Ops Correct Print 300:

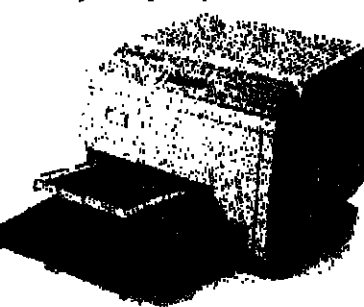
## Photo-realistic production

THERMAL AND Ink-Jet printing is getting better all the time with quality nearing laser quality, but not quite. Every know and then you see a very interesting product that narrows this margin even more. The new thermal color printer from Raster Ops, the Correct Print 300 is one of those printers which hits you with its quite stunning printing quality.

The correct Print 300 uses dye-sublimation photo-realistic technology. To what extent is it photo-realistic, you may wonder? Well, let's just say it beats the socks off any thermal printer I've seen before. It's good enough to use for small scale color publishing.

It owes this to the fact that a RISC processor lies at the heart of this printer providing fast printing even with large color images. The printer uses a four color dye-sublimation printing process at 300 dots-per-inch, hence

the name, and uses four colors (CMYK). It uses special paper and ink ribbons. This should not worry you since a quantity of consumable supplies is provided when you buy the printer.



As far as compatibility is involved, it's PostScript compatible and can use Correct Color Calibrator and color management software allowing you to print images matching your visual display as much as possible.

Useful options include Apple

Talk, Ethernet and serial interfaces enabling you to connect to a network. An external hard disk drive can be connected to improve performance thanks to the SCSI interface included, which means that you can permanently download additional fonts.

It comes in two memory configurations, 12 or 36MB. Memory upgrade kits are available, but 36MB is the recommended configuration to handle all those colors. You should be able to run this printer on any Macintosh computer and PC running Windows 3.0 or greater. If you're using it in a network, you can also run it on the Sun SPARC station.

The printer is currently available in Jordan from Ideal Systems, who promise to offer it at a moderate price. If its value is as good as its printing quality, you should give it a thought. If you're in the publishing business, check it out.

## The tax is back

IF YOU haven't heard already of the new customs tax on computers, where have you been, it's back. Last Saturday an official announcement regarding the cancellation of custom exemption on computers went into effect by placing a customs tax of 1 per cent on computer hardware. For those of you who know a thing or two about the way our tax system works, a simple calculation should make it clear that by the time the computer reaches the end user (that's you and me), we will actually be paying 11 to 12 per cent more and not just 1 per cent more, due to a variety of fees and other related taxes.

Before you rush out to buy yourself a computer, consider the fact that it's probably very difficult to find anyone still selling in accordance with old prices. Only one day after the new customs were announced, many computer companies raised their prices, and some of them are going to ask for new prices for computers they had bought before the tax was imposed! Others were more considerate, regarding placed orders. They decided to pay for a part of the extra percentage, relieving the buyer from completely paying for the price-hike. Of course, some very nice companies will still be offering their computers for the old prices for some time, either until they run out of stock, or till the end of the year.

Some suppliers are actually happy with the new decision! They say it might give them a chance to make more profits! Maybe they can't see the relation between higher prices and lower demand!

What puzzles many is the motive behind all this. According to the official announcement, the reason was because other Arab countries like Egypt place higher custom rates on computers, and Jordan seems to be the only country in the region following tax exemption. Like other taxes, it is expected to increase government revenues, but can we disregard the things expected to be lost. Other questions spring to mind, like the extent of computer penetration in Jordan. Were the past few years enough to allow formation of a solid computer infrastructure in the country? Schools, universities, governmental institutions and private businesses all use computers now. So does this mean, that it is safe now to tax computers without worrying about creating a computer illiterate nation?

Looks like it's going to be a very cold winter for computer users, especially with the value added tax (VAT) also being on the horizon. In a matter of months, we'll be paying not only 11 per cent more, but up to 25 per cent more. Frightening, isn't it? Let's wait and see what effects all of this will have on computer sales. Computer distributors' survival, users' ability to buy computers, and the development of the Jordanian computer industry are all on the line. Let's wait and see...

### Macintosh Vs. Windows

Ideal Systems, distributors for Apple Computers in Jordan, yesterday held the first seminar of its kind in Jordan at the Amman Marriott Hotel. It was about the ever so controversial topic of the differences between the Macintosh operating system and Microsoft Windows for the IBM PC and compatibles, the Mac's main rival in the computer market. The windows war is on and this seminar puts us, users, in the middle of it. If you missed it we'll be giving you more on this next week.

Sonic 2. The famous Mario series is for Nintendo owners especially the brilliant Super Mario 3.

For flight simulation fans, there's lots awaiting you, especially if you're an IBM PC & compatibles user.

Chuck Yeager's Air Combat, F15 Strike Eagle, and most importantly Wing Commander which is probably boosted PC sales amongst games players.

The games scene is looking so

exciting at the moment. Watch out games players, you are in for a real treat! Good games are available in town, but you just have to look around a little bit. There aren't any games publishers as of yet, but some Jordanians are developing games which should see the light quite soon. Currently, games are available on import through swapping by mail.

Platform games are currently the big thing, probably as a direct influence of consoles on the computer market. Best recommended are the Adams Family, a great film license. Robocod, featuring James Pond the underwater agent, Zool the Ninja from the 4th dimension and many others. For Sega Mega-drive owners, as few as they are in Jordan, Sonic the Hedgehog is the best platformer, look out for

Jordan Computer Center

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The Star  
Jordanian political, economic and cultural weekly

# The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

AMMAN, 24 — 30 DECEMBER 1992, VOLUME 3, NUMBER 40

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JORDAN WEEK:  
Big one is coming, earthquake center predicts  
page 2

RJ flies in spite of economic turbulence page 5

The Star  
Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly  
Wishes its readers a Merry Christmas



## Israel's grave mistake

pages 3 & 6

Le Jourdain  
Supplément au français du Star

Pages 12 & 13

In this week's

THE STAR'S  
STATION  
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Macintosh vs.

Windows

Entry-level computing

Arab Bank  
Change of telephone numbers

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# JORDAN

## WEEK

An unconventional report on  
Jordanian news and views

### Israel, Palestinians discuss water issues

The first Israeli-Palestinian International Academic Conference on Water ended in Zurich this week with a call for the establishment of an academic information center and the initiation of joint projects. Some 100 water experts — 25 Israelis, 25 Palestinians and additional participants from 11 countries — met in Zurich at the four day conference to discuss water resources in the region.

The conference was organized by two Jerusalem-based institutions — the Hebrew University and the Maqdes Institute.

Dr. Sari Nusseibeh and Prof. Moshe Mazza emphasized the positive and objective atmosphere that prevailed, despite professional and political differences.

Israel has always considered water issues as both sensitive and secret. Press articles pertaining to water issues had to be approved by the military censor. *Ashgar Al Awasat* newspaper said that Israel refuses to discuss its present control over West Bank water resources, but is welcoming cooperation in water technology.

### UNRWA faces huge deficit

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has announced that it needs \$297 million to finance its projects during 1993, in addition to another \$14 million for emergency projects in Lebanon and the Occupied Territories. *Ad Dustour* newspaper reported this week.

The announcement came during the annual pledging meeting in New York. Norway pledged the largest contribution of \$10.36 million followed by Germany's \$8.8 million and Holland's \$7 million. The biggest Arab contributors were Kuwait (\$1.75 million) and Saudi Arabia with \$1.2 million. The United States, usually among the biggest contributors, Sweden, Japan and Britain have

not made any pledges so far, but are expected to do so early next year. UNRWA's Commissioner General announced that the agency is expecting a deficit of \$20 million, which will affect current programs during 1993. He said if the agency fails to raise additional funds it will have to reduce its services. A number of delegates called on rich Arab governments to be more generous to UNRWA.

### Zo'ubi calls on Premier to reduce taxes

Deputy Salim Zo'ubi has called on the Prime Minister to reduce duty on small vehicles. In a memo sent to Sharif Zaid ben Shaker, Mr. Zo'ubi said Jordanians are unable to obtain small cars because of the high prices, while incomes remained low. He called on the government to find a just solution to the plight of civil servants and members of the Armed Forces who cannot afford to buy a car.

### Sboul comes under fire, again

Interior Minister Mr. Jawdat Sboul came under fire again for failing to legalize the Jordanian People's Democratic Party (Hashd). The spokesman for the Arab Baath Party in Jordan criticized the minister's decision in a statement published by *Ad Dustour* newspaper. He accused Mr. Sboul and the Ministry of Interior of purposely preventing parties "with a wide-spread ideological substance" from functioning in Jordan. Referring to the minister's rejection of applications submitted earlier by the Baath and Communist parties, the spokesman said the ministry is motivated by "doubts and the nightmares of lack of confidence." He added that the ministry is still pursuing traditional policies which have existed since 1957. The spokesman said the minister's decision contravenes the Constitution and

called for high level intervention to deal with what he described as "the fault" in the ministry's handling of the matter.

### House postpones debate of press law

The Lower House of Parliament approved the State Security draft law this week, which was returned to the House by His Majesty the King. The House endorsed the recommendations of its Legal Committee, which gave the right to appeal the court's rulings. Deputies had expressed reservations about the right of the Executive Branch to form the panel of judges. Meanwhile, the House decided to postpone debates on the Press and Publications draft law to give deputies more time to study the draft. The proposed draft has created controversy among Jordanian journalists who object to certain articles, which they see as infringing on the freedom of the press and on the rights of journalists.

The House is awaiting a second review of the draft law by the Legal Committee along with new amendments. Article 19, the International Center Against Censorship, published a report earlier this month in which it criticized the draft press and publication law. It said the draft law is widely criticized by Jordanian journalists and human rights organizations. It said the law contains many provisions which "if passed by Parliament would undoubtedly put freedom of expression and information in jeopardy."

Article 19 expressed its concern about the licensing of journalists, newspapers and periodicals, access to information, protection of journalists' sources and restriction on press coverage and prior restraint. The report said provisions in the draft law "contradict Jordan's constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom of expression."

### New Japanese ambassador arrives

Japan's newly-appointed ambassador to Jordan Mr. Yuji Ikeda expressed his hope that Jordan-Japanese relations will strengthen in all spheres. Speaking to Petra news agency upon his arrival in Amman on Sunday, Mr. Ikeda commended Jordan for its reputation and status and for its vital role in the region and in the peace process.

### Senator lashes out at US, Europe over Bosnia

Upper House Senator Mr. Kamel Al Sharif expressed his frustration in dealing with Europe's inefficiency in dealing with the plight of the Bosnian people in former Yugoslavia in an article he published this week in the daily *Ad Dustour*. Mr. Sharif, a prominent Muslim thinker, wrote that the conflict in the Balkans is like the mythical Gordian Knot in its complexity and compared the



considered as a safety valve to preempt cumulative pressure in the earth's crust, but it is also an indicator of the increase in these pressures. The letter said Jordanian analysis of seismic activity in the Cairo and Gulf of Suez regions has proved more accurate than Egyptian analysis.

He said that after attending many meetings in various capitals during the last two months on the conflict, he became convinced that the governments of the United States and Western Europe do not want to intervene to stop the bloody carnage.

He added that a recently-held meeting in Scotland concluded that what is happening in Bosnia was not a civil or sectarian war, but a war of extermination against an unarmed people. The participants, among them British MPs and university professors, also said the US and European decision not to intervene in the early days of the conflict gave the Serbs the green light to erase the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina through barbaric crimes.

They also said, according to Mr. Sharif, that the UN arms embargo against the two fighting parties was meant to disarm the people of Bosnia from means of self-defense against a despotic power that has one of Europe's most modern armies. They also declared that the peace talks sponsored by certain countries were maneuvers to give time for Serbia's ethnic cleansing operation to conclude.

Mr. Sharif criticized Arab and Muslim countries for their weak response to the Bosnia and Herzegovina issue. He said that the lack of a firm Arab-Muslim position was one of the excuses presented by others to justify their own lack of action.

### Big one is coming, earthquake center predicts

The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources has said that contrary to common belief, the north western part of the Arabian Plate is a focus of seismic activity, which may result in a powerful earthquake in the future. This revelation came in a letter sent to two Lower House deputies who had requested information on the Jordan Earthquake Monitoring Center. The ministry said the region had in the past been a stage for historic earthquakes, including the one that created the Rift Valley millions of years ago. That earthquake measured more than 6 degrees on the Richter scale.

The letter said the recent increase in seismic activity can be

### Local contractors get it all

A report by the Ministry of Public Works has found that public sector contracting spending reached JD 141 million in 1991, while it was only JD 58 million in 1990. Private sector spending for 1991 was JD 455 million compared with JD 234 million in 1990. Local contractors were awarded 96 percent of public sector work, the report said.

### Jordanians join Somalia mission

Jordan will dispatch troops to Somalia under UN auspices to participate in international efforts to restore hope in the war-ravaged country. Qatari News Agency reported this week. King Hussein told CNN International this week that Jordan will participate in UN efforts in Somalia.

### Israel levies \$1 b. in taxes from workers

Israel has levied more than \$1 billion in taxes from Palestinian workers in the Occupied Territories since 1970, according to a study quoted by *Al Quds* newspaper in Jerusalem. It said some taxes, deducted from salaries, were taken as National Insurance, which does not benefit Palestinian workers.

The study said the number of officially registered Palestinian workers working inside Israel last year reached 70,000. It estimated that at least 150 million shekels will be deducted from their wages in 1993. The report attacked these unfair measures and said Palestinian workers receive no unemployment or retirement benefits from Israel.

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# Plight of Palestinian deportees leaves peace process in tatters

By a Star Staff Writer

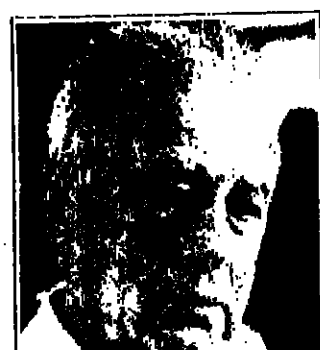
AS 415 Palestinian evictees continued to camp in no man's land between Israel's self-declared security zone and South Lebanon, prospects for a quick resolution to their plight appeared dim.

With both Israel and Lebanon refusing to admit them, the men battled against freezing temperatures and worsening weather conditions in a make-shift camp in Marj Al Zuhoor 400 meters away from an Israeli check point. With dwindling food supplies and no medical care available, their ordeal has left the peace process in tatters.

Their eviction by Israel from the Occupied Territories on Thursday, after Hamas activists killed a kidnapped Israeli soldier a few days earlier, has been widely condemned, especially by the UN Security Council. The men, accused by Israel of being Hamas and Jihad Islami activists and supporters, have no place to go to, but a ruling by Israel's supreme court to reject appeals by lawyers and relatives to allow the men to return has created a deadlock.

At least one person was injured when a mortar shell fired by Israeli troops to prevent the evictees from marching back exploded a few meters from the marchers. Others have been taken to a Lebanese hospital for treatment.

Eyewitnesses and humanitarian agencies' representatives agree that the evictees can not hold for long under present circumstances. Political observers inside and outside Israel believe the Israeli government may have committed a fatal mistake both tactically and strategically in dealing with the affair.



Rabin: Tough measures

US ambassador to the UN Mr. Edward Perkins said Israel's deportation of Palestinians "plays into the hands of those whose goal is to scuttle the peace process." The United States voted for a unanimous resolution condemning the Israeli action. A Clinton administration spokesman regretted the deportation and called on Israel to reconsider its action.

The PLO called on the UN to protect Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, while foreign ministers of the Arab countries participating in the peace talks, in addition to Egypt, plan to meet in Cairo today, Thursday, to discuss the deportation.

Palestinian spokeswoman Mrs. Hanan Ashrawi said the supreme court's ruling has dealt a fatal shot to the peace process. Meanwhile, as Israel lifted its week-long siege of Palestinian towns in the West Bank and Gaza, all indications pointed to worsening security conditions in the Occupied Territories. Confrontations between Israeli troops and Palestinians continued with at least three Palestinians shot dead by Israeli forces.

Observers believed Hamas and Jihad Islami activists were re-



Palestinian deportees await their fate in no-man's land between Lebanon and Israel



A group of evictees pray outside their tents in freezing temperatures

grouping after their renewed alliance with the leadership of the Intifada. Both have agreed to replace general strikes with general escalation.

Palestinian organizations objecting to Palestinian participation in the peace talks, like the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), called on the Palestinian negotiating team to withdraw immediately from the talks.

Israel's decision not to allow the evictees to return will reflect on the general mood inside the Occupied Territories. This is what pro-peace Israeli groups have been telling the Israeli public, who favored the retaliation measures of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's government, which included the arrest of more than 1200 suspected Hamas supporters.

A number of Israeli columnists have written that Israel's policy of allowing Hamas to grow to weaken the PLO's influence in the "territories" has backfired with last week's events.

Columnist Shlomo Gazeet wrote in *Yediot Ahranot* that the recent surge in armed attacks by Hamas and other rejectionist groups marks an important turn in the Palestinian struggle against occupation.

He said Israel is finding itself today in a real war, where targets are no longer innocent Israelis, but Israeli soldiers and policemen. He suggested that Israel has two alternatives to deal with this war: One is collective punishment, with the hope that it will put an end to Palestinian militancy.

The second is the political approach, where an agreement with the Palestinians will discredit those who stand against peace and redirect their resistance towards the Palestinian leadership. It is obvious that the Israeli government has chosen the former approach.

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An Israeli soldier handcuffs a Palestinian in Jerusalem following Israel's deportation of 415 Palestinians

# Cabinet to approve JD 20 million loan for housing

By Vesna Masharqa  
Special to The Star

THE CABINET has agreed to schedule a meeting in January to discuss its 1993 JD 20 million budget for housing, in an attempt to tackle the Kingdom's growing housing problems.

Mr Yusuf Haisat, director of Jordan's Urban Development Corporation (UDC), told The Star that although the Kingdom "does not suffer as such from the problems of homelessness", the need for housing in Jordan in recent years has reached an annual ceiling of around 25,000 families. Through working with the government, the UDC aims to address such needs, amongst others.

Mr Haisat said that housing needs in Jordan are commonly related to the demands of the traditional extended family, where family members insist upon additional housing for others, or for extensions to be built on existing accommodation.

According to Mr Haisat, the UDC currently provides between



Mr Yusuf Haisat

10 and 15 percent of Jordan's housing needs, catering for low, middle and even high income households. The rest is covered by the private sector (around three percent) and owner-builders, who constitute around 85 percent.

"Our main intention is to mobilize modest financial potential within the low income sector," said Mr Haisat, explaining that around 85 percent of those in need of housing in Jordan fall into this low income bracket.

He also said that the UDC aims to facilitate conditions for such people to obtain housing. One way has been by directing its policies towards amending land regulations, with the final aim of legalizing them on the land market. The UDC is also making efforts to improve legislation, which should provide the opportunity for people to buy their own flats by investing 20 to 25 percent of their monthly income.

This legislation, which focuses on housing sites, services and upgrading, will assist those seeking housing to either buy small flats (70 to 120 square meters in size) or 200 square meter plots of land, upon which they will be allowed to construct a building of up to three storeys. Infrastructure such as electricity and water supplies, roads and community service



A completed UDC housing project

buildings are being provided by the UDC.

With regards to upgrading, the UDC is currently "focussing on existing residential areas, providing what is missing in terms of infrastructure and reconstructing old units," according to Mr Haisat.

He added that before starting any project, the UDC conducts extensive socio-economic studies aimed at detecting the real needs of people in specific areas. Analysis of these studies is also undertaken, so as to determine the ways of fulfilling such needs.

UDC plans for the coming year reveal a long list of projects, both new and in the making. In Zarqa, 392 new apartments are scheduled to be built in '93, as are 100 units in Salt and 300 houses in Marka. By the end of next year it is also hoped that a UDC housing project currently underway in Amman will be finalized, and that a further project will be started in Al Taiba. Um Noura and Rusafa will also have extensions added to existing units which are already being occupied.

As far as land projects are concerned, the vacant plots which were distributed in 1991 in Irbid and Marka will be available for development as of 1994.

Heading southwards towards Aqaba, it is hoped that the project in the Hazan area, which has sup-

plied a number of 60 to 70 square meter houses will be completed, while another project providing 200 square meter apartments for those more comfortably off has been slated to begin in the course of next year.

"We are also preparing a five-year project for more remote, rural areas," said Mr Haisat. He explained that although the UDC would like to be able to contribute more facilities for such regions, they are faced with constant problems due to a need for comprehensive studies by the government and for much wider involvement in these matters by governmental institutions.

"However," he said, "we are particularly hopeful of further prosperous cooperation between the private and public sectors in dealing with Jordan's housing problems. This will be for both urban and rural areas, according to the real needs of the population."

"Since 1966, 40,000 families have participated in UDC projects in various parts of the Kingdom," Dr Haisat added. "And I hope that we will be able to contribute more and more towards settling Jordan's housing problems, to the point that one day each family will be able to enjoy sufficient space for every member of their households." ■

## Economy Briefs

### Arab labor conference

■ A conference is to be held in Amman between 5 and 12 April to discuss a paper on the role of women in Arab economies. The significance of this issue arises from the high productive role the female population in Arab countries has been enjoying recently. The conference is expected to bring together ministers and organizations representing 21 Arab countries, along with a number of international organizations with interests in labor issues.

### Royal Jordanian (RJ) target retreat

■ RJ announced that its profit potential was not realized within the first 11 months of this year; cargo uplifts were 25.7 percent below target, mail 22 percent and excess baggage 19.1 percent below projections. Passenger traffic was closest to target, being only 2.7 percent below the set quota.

### Update on the economy

■ Fresh economic indicators reflecting Jordan's economic status in 1992 were referenced by Finance Minister Mr Basel Jaradneh in the 1993 draft budget law speech in the Lower House. On the darkest side of Jordan's national accounts, 1992 indicators showed a 20 percent increase in imports, hence a 24 percent reversal in our balance of trade, despite a 15 percent increase in exports. This is against a three percent drop in imports in 1991. Some important good news, however, is that our inflation rate dropped to four percent.

### Less tax revenues

■ Taxes untied until 1 January 1992 have been estimated at more than JD 1.2 billion, registering a 19 percent increase on last year.

By Bilal Hijawi  
Star Staff Writer

LAST YEAR'S Royal Jordanian (RJ) low operating profit was to be expected. While world travel has reached its lowest economic cycle for the third consecutive year, the Gulf War and its repercussions brought load factor on the Amman-GCC routes to its lowest ebb.

As a result RJ's attempts at profit maximization and debt re- settlement met with little success. A sign for alarm according to the airlines' President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mr Mahmoud Balqez, who told RJ's sales and marketing managers at their annual meeting last week that "a low operating profit is only a marginal improvement over disaster."

However, this year's financial returns included some placating figures. "Our operating profit this year is expected to be around JD 30 million, some of which were achieved through reducing operating expenses," Mr Balqez said. A step forward considering that RJ was kept airborne by continuous debt accumulation through heavy borrowing for a long time. The modest profit is good news for investors, but it is no cause for celebration.

"In an effort to alleviate our financial burden and shed off excess capacity we grounded two of our A310 aircraft.....this in addition to the long and protracted discussions with the banks and lessors for re-scheduling some of our debts," the CEO told his marketing team.

According to Mr Balqez, profit was realized by spending 5 percent less than budgeted, while bringing passenger revenues close to target. Yet a substantial shortfall in cargo, mail and excess baggage revenues prevented RJ from achieving a hefty operating profit to meet interest cost and some repayment of accumulated debts.

Furthermore, low profitability did not help RJ reduce its debt burden since debt reduction requires higher than normal rates of profit and revenue maximization. Accordingly, RJ's debts have remained at the same levels of the past.

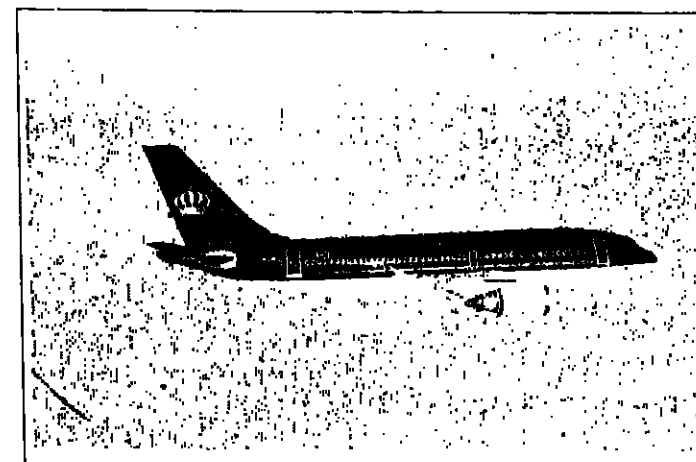
Revenue maximization comes about by competing with international carriers — a situation that is either tied up to capital investments spent on enlarging current aircraft fleet while adding expensive in-flight electronics and entertainment gadgetry, or it can come about from opening lucrative new routes. In addition to these strategies, airline companies require diverse, elaborate and targeted marketing efforts.

Last year "the government commissioned Arthur Anderson, one of the well-know aviation consultants, to survey the airline in all its aspects," Mr Balqez said. The consultants' report said that RJ's operating strategy was in essence correct, it called for large cash injection and restraint on large financial and fleet commitments.

Working along a few of these guidelines, RJ has added new destinations such as Aden, Jakarta, Berlin, Toronto and have resumed service to Athens, all within the existing operating fleet. "These markets were not introduced without a thorough feasibility study," Mr Balqez said. According to latest RJ flight figures, Berlin was the only destination that has raised some worries about its worthiness.

On the marketing front, enhanced inter-organizational communication has brought about the desired flow of information and

# RJ stays airborne in spite of economic turbulence



RJ: No cause for celebration

avoid bankruptcy—it was saved each time.

Jordan's national carrier will have to go private if its future competitiveness in the interna-

tional arena is to be achieved. According to Mr Mohammad Ghaleb Madadha, RJ's public relations deputy manager, the privatization of RJ has been going

smoothly and the government has appointed a committee to oversee the transition. "It will either offer RJ stocks through the Jordan Central Bank, tender the transaction to leading financial institutions, or may form a financial unit to serve this purpose," he told The Star.

In the first stage of the privatization program, RJ's old status as an autonomous governmental corporation was compromised. "The government plans to initially own the new commercial company where after it is intended to proceed to private ownership," Mr Balqez said. Furthermore, in a transitional stage preceding privatization, control of the company had been turned over to the Ministry of Transport, where the minister of transport chairs RJ's board meeting.

This particular point has prevented the Royal stamp of approval over RJ's new draft law. His Majesty King Hussein returned the new law to Parliament this week with a request that it be amended so that RJ's chairman be appointed by a Royal Decree. ■

## Covering the world

The WorldPaper explores and examines the most vital global issues—economic, political and cultural—that affect people all over the world. The WorldPaper goes beyond a western perspective on environmental protection, economic development and political reform by using top journalists around the world who are native to the regions about which they write. It specializes in presenting the voices of the world speaking for themselves.

This year, The WorldPaper cover stories have ranged from global financial fraud ("The World of Dirty Money") to the rise of volunteerism ("The NGO Revolution"), from developments in agriculture ("Not by Bread or Rice Alone") to the upheavals in Eastern Europe ("Freedom is Great, but Expensive").

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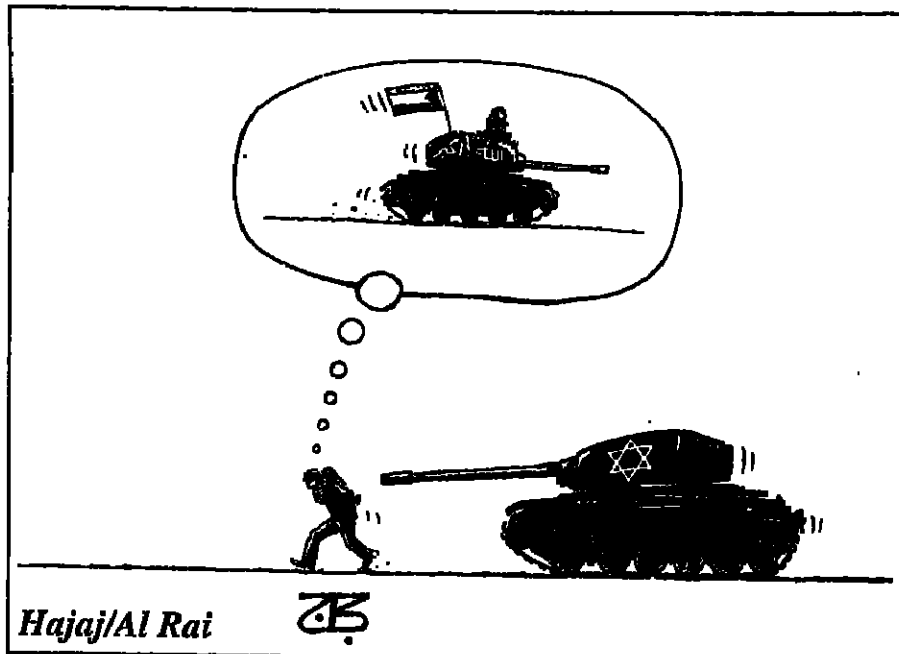
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## Our Say...

### Rabin's fatal blunder

THE DEPORTATION of more than 400 Palestinians from their homeland by Israel last week in retaliation for the killing of an Israeli border policeman by Hamas activists, will prove to be a major political blunder by the government of Yitzhak Rabin. In the short run, Israel appears to have survived the international outrage against its latest crime. This is not surprising, since calls for tougher actions, not excluding sanctions, have fallen on deaf ears.

What distinguishes this latest act of Israeli barbarism from the scores committed before is the fact that over 415 Palestinians are stranded in no-man's land between Israel and Lebanon, attracting media attention and world sympathy. This is not the convenient solution that Israel was seeking.

The timing of this sordid episode is important. Notwithstanding the frustratingly slow pace of peace negotiations, Palestinians in the Occupied Territories have been escalating their resistance to the occupation. Hamas and other fundamentalist groups have mesmerized the imaginations of their fellow citizens with their daring and successful raids against Israeli soldiers. Israel's retaliation, which focused on Hamas leaders and sympathizers, will undoubtedly cement Hamas' grassroots support in the occupied areas.

In the coming days and weeks we will witness an intensification of Palestinian confrontations with the Israeli forces, with more dead and injured among the heroes of the Intifada. With the mandatory hiatus in the peace talks taking effect until President-elect Clinton is sworn in, the modest gains of the peace process so far will be scuttled because of the Israeli government's miscalculations.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine the negotiators resuming their talks as if nothing had happened. While we do not call for Arab withdrawal from the talks, we believe a strong action on their part is called for.

UN condemnation is not enough. The deportees must be allowed to return because Israel's violation of international law and the Geneva Conventions are putting the peace process at risk. One is bound to ask what Israel's next retaliatory action would be when Hamas or some other Palestinian group strikes again. The world can not allow these violations to continue. It is not the case of one or one thousand deportees, but Israel's choice to deal with its conflict with the Palestinians politically or militarily.

Mr Rabin has made a wrong move, if his intentions to seek a political solution to Israel's occupation of Arab lands are to be taken at face value. On the other hand, if his aim is to extinguish the Intifada or stamp out Hamas or Islamic Jihad, then he has made a blunder.

The Israelis will have to realize that the near future holds tough and difficult choices for them. They will have to deal with mounting Palestinian resistance, which is becoming more organized, more sophisticated and more popular. So far their choices have been the wrong ones, as they will find out very soon.

The plight of 400 Palestinians surviving in the freezing wilderness is draining Israel's moral reservoir. The Israelis, and Mr Rabin in particular, must understand by now that every time they try to obliterate legitimate Palestinian aspirations, the Palestinians come out as winners. ■

## Media and Parliament: In search of a compromise

By Muhammad I. Aysli

DURING THE past three years, our march toward a fully-democratic Jordan has been guided by a clarity of vision and a profound conviction in the ultimate redeeming socio-political and moral values of democracy. The process of transition to an institution-based society has been going on so smoothly in Jordan that we have become envied by neighboring dictatorships.

Yet, one aspect of our democracy that seems to look odd in this fledgling experience is the uneasy relationship between two major actors in our newly-emerging public life: The Lower House of Parliament and the press.

In theory, a freely-elected parliament and a free press are brought about as an immediate outcome of the democratic process to serve as voice for the general public, who in the final analysis, voted the deputies into the House. Equally important is the general public, the consumers in other words, whose satisfaction the press seeks to achieve. This statement about press-parliament squabbling should in no way imply that the two "Estates" ought to have an across-the-board convergence of interest in all occasions and on all issues.

In a democracy, deputies are politicians who are not infallible and whose behavior and performance may be viewed as legitimate targets of press investigations. The objective here is to highlight the fact that, more or less, the press relationship with MPs has been marked by mistrust and lack of cooperation on many issues of pivotal importance for the public interest.

With less than a year left before Jordanians go to the polls to elect a new Parliament, one needs to reflect on the reasons behind this less-than-satisfactory relationship. It is argued here that much of the tensions that we have seen have resulted from media-deputies' race to win the hearts and minds of the general public either as voters or consumers. On their part, deputies have fallen short of fully achieving this goal simply because of an image problem that many of them have inflicted on themselves. First, the moment some deputies opted to join the cabinet as government ministers, they placed themselves in a critical situation in which they had to reconcile their mission as lawmakers with a watchdog function, vis-a-vis government policies and programs and their being part of that apparatus.

By serving in the executive branch, many deputies seem to have lost much of their pre-election glamor as advocates of public interest. They are incapable of placing checks and balances on government behavior since their goal is to advocate and perpetuate that behavior. When some Muslim Brotherhood cabinet ministers tried to add a touch of their ideological convictions on their work, they could not make it in office for a long time.

Another reason for the somewhat shaky image of deputies is the failure of many of them to match their pre-election shrill rhetoric with post-election deeds. Many deputies have come to learn the hard way about the inhibitive imperatives of political life that they had not taken into account. Some deputies have painstakingly tried to make up for such discrepancy by turning up heat in parliamentary sessions.

But with full media coverage impossible, due to limited air time and newspaper space, many MPs have been unable to relay their views to their constituencies, and saw it convenient to unleash their fury at what they perceived as "closed media."

Although the Shbielnt-Qarrash case has added a lot to the sagging image of many deputies, the most recent instance negatively affecting MPs has been the ongoing debate on the Press and Publications Law, in which deputies have demonstrated that they are lagging behind the government in liberalism with their insistence on passing the law in quite restrictive frameworks. This attitude has not only alienated the press community in the country, but it has also prompted negative reactions from international organizations and groups concerned about press freedom around the world.

It has been shocking to learn that deputies who were brought to the House to advance the cause of freedom of press and speech are in fact voting in majority to scuttle that freedom.

Though the above mentioned reasons were bound to generate a shaky image of deputies in the eyes of the media and the general public, the fact that the press had to selectively dwell for long on these weak spots has been unjustifiable. It is true that MPs are politicians who would be targeted by press investigations, but the executive branch of government deserves far more scrutiny from the press since it is responsible for implementing programs and drawing out plans of action in the various fields of national development.

The press's coverage of the government's statements on major issues before Parliament has embodied some elements of apologetism and appeasement, carried out under the pretext of objectivity. When it comes to the coverage of deputies' statements, the amount of space devoted is far less than that given to government news. To understand this media behavior, one needs to consider two factors.

First, our current media practitioners are, more or less, the same ones who operated in the pre-democracy era. They grew up with a certain version of professionalism that was largely based on blind loyalty. Many of the news practices of our newsrooms were institutionalized a long time ago, and most of them do not seem to be conducive to a daring media performance. In this sense, it is not surprising to see that those practices are being perpetuated into the democratic era.

In addition to sheer "lack of guts" on the part of the press vis-a-vis the executive branch, we have seen the media losing their vision in their quest for an adversarial role in the democratic period. The deputies, being transient with no executive powers, seemed to be convenient and easy targets for media manipulations.

This trend has intensified in recent weeks with the resumption of debate on the Press and Publications Law, turning into a vindictive battle between the two Estates. The general public is the major loser of this losing fight.

As we look forward to the 1993 national elections, we also cherish a hope for a more mature and a healthier relationship between deputies and the media. The recent meeting between the Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament and a visiting delegation representing the Jordanian Journalists Association has been a promising step for building a constructive relationship.

Realizing that goal, however, requires a bilateral reconsideration of both sides' attitudes and behaviors in light of national interest. ■

Muhammad I. Aysli is an associate professor at the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Yarmouk University.

Two victims of Serbian soldiers tell their stories:

## Rape after rape after rape

By Slavenka Drakulic

WHAT IS happening in Bosnia and Herzegovina to Muslim and Croatian women seems unprecedented in the history of war crimes. Women are raped by Serbian soldiers in an organized and systematic way, as a planned crime to destroy a whole Muslim population, to destroy a society's cultural, traditional and religious integrity.

The numbers are chilling: In October, the Ministry of Interior of Bosnia and Herzegovina estimated that 50,000 women and girls had been raped, and many impregnated on purpose. It is feared that since then the number has risen even further. The ministry has collected and documented 13,000 cases.

Journalists and feminists have interviewed women in refugee camps in Croatia, and it is through their stories that the world has discovered this tragedy. In the civilized world, rape is a crime. Mass rape is a method of genocide that should also become a war crime and be outlawed in all international conventions. The lives of tens of thousands of women have been destroyed; the world owes them at least that.

Z.N., age 40

"As soon as Chetniks (Serbs) came into our city, they selected women, children and the old people; men were taken to a concentration camp with an excuse that they were to be mobilized. They put hundreds of us in a school in Doboj and they turned it into a kind camp. Our Serbian neighbors locked us in. I knew many, they used to visit our house. As soon as we entered a camp, 'maricevic' (followers of Milan Maric, a Serbian leader) came in with guns and selected younger women and girls. They put them in the hall and told the Chetniks to do with the women what they pleased.

There was silence. Then the crazy, dirty, stinking Chetniks jumped at the women like animals; they tore off their clothes, pulled their hair, cut their breasts with their knives. They cut the bellies of the women who wore the traditional Muslim baggy trousers. Those who screamed would be killed on the spot.

In front of a few hundred prisoners they raped and tortured women and girls for days. It was unbearable to watch girls being raped in front of their fathers. In the evening, after heavy drinking, the Chetniks would come to the hall with lamps. Stepping on us, they would look for girls; not older than 12, 13.

The girls cried, holding on to their mothers. As they were taken, pieces of their mothers' clothes remained in their hands. While doing that, the Chetniks would shoot at us. Later they would leave the girls' dead bodies in the hall, so we had to see them. We cried until morning. Then they would throw the bodies in the river.

Every day the same picture was repeated; they would rape and

kill in front of hundreds of us. Once a young woman with a baby was taken in the middle of the hall. It was in June. They ordered her to take off her clothes. She put the baby on the floor next to her. Four Chetniks raped her, she was silent, looking at her crying child. When she was left alone, she asked if she could breast-feed the baby. Then a Chetnik cut her child's head off with a knife. He gave the bloody head to the mother. The poor woman screamed. They took her outside and she never came back. The biggest criminals in Doboj are Bosko Jelic, Milenko Varnjes, Mico Tuca, the brothers Stanovic and Jorgovic.

I was raped and tortured too, because they knew that I am a wife of a leader of the Muslim party. My neighbor tortured me the most, the one my husband respected as his own brother. By the end of June, Chetniks brought another neighbor of ours and

with a gun pointed at him they forced him to rape a 14-year-old girl. He stood trembling and stuttering with fear.

Then he turned to a Chetnik he believed was a leader and said: "Don't make me do it. I have known her since she was born — her father and I drank to her birth." They beat him in front of us until he died. It was an example to the other Serbs that there is no pity, that one must do what leaders order them to do.

In August, some prisoners were exchanged, including me and my sons. Many women and girls who were pregnant remained in the camp. They were transferred to hospital and fed twice a day because, as the Chetniks said, they had to bear their offspring."

E., age 16.

"The massacre after the attack on my village was the greatest tragedy of my life. I did not know

then that destiny had something even worse in store for me.

Several Chetniks arrived. One, a man around 30, ordered me to follow him into the house. I had to go. He started looking for money, jewelry and other valuables. He wanted to know where the men were. I didn't answer. Then he ordered me to undress. I was terribly afraid. I took off my clothes, feeling that I was falling apart. The feeling seemed under my skin. I was dying, my entire being was murdered. I closed my eyes, I couldn't look at him. He hit me. I fell. Then he lay on me. I cried, twisted my body convulsively, I bled.

He went out and invited two Chetniks to come in. I cried. The two repeated what the first one had done to me. I felt lost. I didn't even know when they left. I don't know how long I stayed there, lying on the floor alone, in a pool of blood.

My mother found me. I couldn't imagine anything worse. I had been raped, destroyed and terribly hurt. But for my mother this was the greatest sorrow of our lives. We both cried and screamed. She dressed me.

I would like to be a mother some day. But how? In my world, men represent terrible violence and pain. I cannot control that feeling. ■

The New York Times

## South Asia's many fundamentalisms

By Edward A. Gargan

THE CRY on the lips of the Hindus who stormed and destroyed an obscure mosque in the northern Indian town of Ayodhya was deafening and terse: "Jai Sri Ram!" (Hail Lord Ram!).

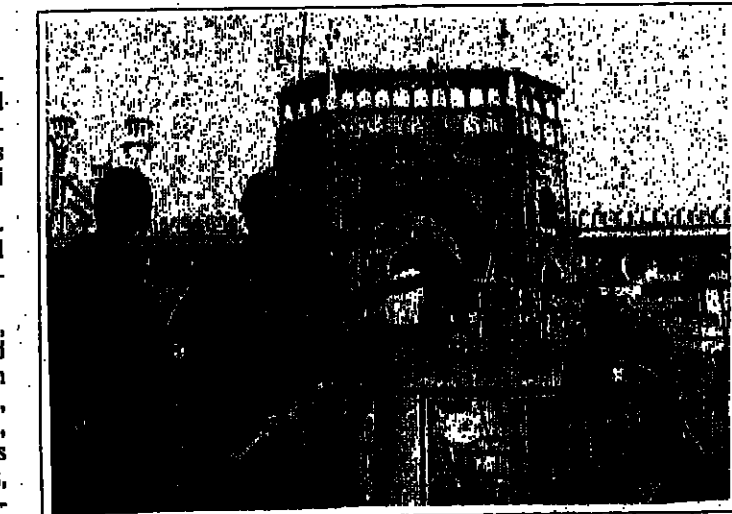
The cry on the lips of the *mujahadeen* who routed into Kabul last spring was also terse: "Allahu Akbar!" ("God is Great!").

In India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bhutan, Kashmir, Sri Lanka and throughout South Asia, the claim on people's emotions and politics, and the driving force of armies, guerrilla warfare, human-rights abuses and government policy is, increasingly, the power of fundamentalist beliefs. These forces are stronger and more articulate in some places than others, but everywhere reasoned discourse is being displaced by the intolerance of fundamentalism.

Fundamentalist religious and political organizations have won broad appeal, particularly in India, where last week more than 1,000 people died in sectarian violence.

In India religious issues are being drawn more and more starkly. The Hindu fundamentalists' use of the mythical god Ram, a warrior-king whose exploits are told in the epic the *Ramayana*, exemplifies the manipulation of Hinduism for political purposes and propagating intolerance.

For millennia, Hinduism has been eclectic, embracing and flexible. It was not bound by one deity or text, nor a hierarchical clergy or uniform liturgy. It prescribed little and tolerated much. Under centuries of invasion, invasions by Muslims at that, it



Police in Old Delhi guard a mosque after Hindu-Muslim riots

was astonishingly resilient.

But now, as Indians see themselves surrounded by Islamic states — Pakistan and Afghanistan to the west, Bangladesh to the east, the central Asian republics to the north — a less accommodating Hinduism has become not only appealing, but necessary.

In recent years, Hindu leaders decided that they had found the exact spot where the god Ram was born. The site was an undistinguished mosque built in 1528 by the Mogul invader Babur in an obscure but holy Hindu town. A decision was taken to put idols of Ram inside. A crisis ensued. Hindus demanded that the mosque be replaced by a temple to Ram, and Muslims insisted that the idols be relocated in Ayodhya, and the temple built there.

Vishnu Hari Dalmia, president of the World Hindu Council, a hardcore religious group that demanded the demolition of the mosque and which was declared illegal last week, expressed in a recent interview the Hindus' uncompromising stance. "Muslim fundamentalism is going throughout the world," he said. "Thousands of Hindu religious places were destroyed by the Moguls. According to the Hindus, Lord Ram descended on this spot. Hindus have been fighting to regain possession of this place for hundreds of years. This is not a matter to be decided in the courts. This is a matter of faith."

So the battle line is drawn by Hindu fundamentalists. Political counterparts of religious groups have mushroomed in popularity. Just three years ago, the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Hindu fundamentalist political party, was

another minor party. Now it is the largest opposition party in Parliament.

In Pakistan, a nation created for religious reasons, the forces of fundamentalist Islam have always been stronger than secular ideals. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has turned to fundamentalist leaders to lend religious legitimacy to sometimes unpopular policies, to consolidate his control and, in his view, to buy off challengers. The consequences have led steadily to a religious state. Religious law is practiced, alcohol is banned, television shows are censored and women, while not forced to wear chadors, cover their heads. Islamists have demanded that interest be banned in banking. For the fundamentalists, Pakistan's civil courts are subservient to the religious courts, and the constitution to religious law.

Bangladesh, never comfortable with Islam, has been battered in the last year by zealous students and Muslim figure heads. Increasingly, religious slogans are mixing with the political, and the criterion of truth is religious, not civil.

Sri Lanka struggled in the 1980s with extreme Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism, represented by the shadowy group the Janata Vimukti Peramuna, or People's Liberation Front. In subduing the movement, government death squads and the army killed up to 50,000 Sri Lankans. Now, as Tamil separatists persist in their guerrilla war for an independent country, rumors of a revival of Sinhalese nationalism are once again reverberating.

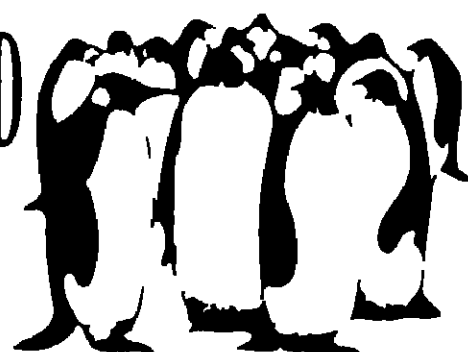
But it is in India where antisectionalist and antidemocratic fundamentalism is rising. The Congress Party, which has ruled India for most of its post-independence history, is floundering. Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, a secularist who expressed anguish over the destruction and violence at the Ayodhya mosque, seems unsure in the challenge by Hindu fundamentalism. He called for a campaign of national education. ■

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AROUND  
TOWN

**Congratulations!!**  
Graduations, appointments, engagements, weddings, newborns, promotions, special awards, excellent achievements.....  
Drop us a line and send a photo...we will run it free of charge in The Star's People and Events page.

## Art from Gaza

## A contemporary record of the Intifada

By Haytham Ibrahim  
Special to The Star

THE FIRE that rages daily in Palestine, particularly in Gaza, can offer strong inspiration for artistic sentiment.

Three Gazan artists have painted their anger against the occupation in an exhibition being held at the Shoman Foundation. Kamel Al Mughanni, Laila Al Shawa and Fayez Al Hassani have made a political statement, expressing artistically their inner selves and the Intifada.

Fayez Al Hassani is a traditional painter from Gaza city, facing all the hardships and brutality of military force. This is probably the reason why his paintings are so blunt and candid in their statements.

One such painting depicts a white horse that is trying to 'bite' his way out of the occupation's grip. Another illustrates Al Aqsa Mosque, with the added touch of a personal statement. His paintings do not exceed beyond the boundaries of traditionalism, maybe because the occupation in its brutality drains the artist of an aesthetic environment.

Kamel Al Mughanni uses cement as a substitute for the usual canvas, adding a smooth texture to his paintings. The best of Mughanni's paintings, entitled 'Heritage One', represents graphically many traditional Palestinian elements, including national dresses, in a very solid and thought out context.

His anger is also blunt in its expression, but he has a finer, elegant touch with the choice of colors that he uses.

The most outstanding of the artists has to be Laila Al Shawa, currently living in London. She considers herself to be a contemporary artist with the duty of recording the signs of the times. Because she believes that the harshness of the occupation can not be romanticized or glossed over, she chose photography as a channel for her artistry to flow through.

Her paintings always involve a lovely photograph, superimposed with colors. This produces a filtering effect, a window that we can see her paintings through. She also uses the elements of a photograph, complemented by superimposed colors, giving the end result of several distinctive Palestinian flags from the Intifada.

The main concept behind all of Laila's paintings revolve around colored geometric shapes. She believes them to be absolute in their form, just like the inevitability of the occupation's disintegration, a statement the Intifada tries to stamp with stones.

'The walls of Gaza (6)' is undoubtedly a brilliant work, showing a pile of rubble, divided into two squares. It truly captures the spirit of modern times, with a strong, deep quality.

Purple seems an obscure color to use with such a sensitive subject as the Intifada, but Laila inserts it in her art because she is keen to represent the dialogue between the Palestinians and the occupation troops. (The Israelis used purple to cover all



the writing on the walls at the beginning of the Intifada.) US Dollar signs are also shown as far sprayed by the Israeli Army to cover the writing on the walls. Again Laila uses this to achieve the final image of an American flag, with stars and stripes and all!

Oppression can generate a flood of emotions. Maybe this is why the Palestinians face war machines with a strong heart on the inside and a stone on the outside.

Oppression can also lead to other kinds of statements than with stones, and art comes through as a successful medium through which to represent people's desires and feelings. Our future, our children, have become, as Laila states, targets for the Israeli Army. They should be our future. But never forget, the walls of Gaza are still alive!

## Agenda

## FILMS

● The American Center will be closed on 24 December in observance of Christmas Day. Activities will resume with the screening of 'Cinderella' on Sunday 27 December and on Wednesday 30 December.

● All centers will close their doors this week in observance of Christmas day.

## EXHIBITIONS

● Under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Nafila Ali, the inauguration of Rina Ghandour Tarazi's first exhibition will take place at the Royal Cultural Center, 5:30 pm, Saturday 26 December.



## 'Thebes' opening in Amman

● A NEW play from Al Fawanees Theater Group was presented to the Union of Arab Writers and Intellectuals on the occasion of their 18th Conference, which was held in Amman last week.

Al Fawanees' *The Death of Thebes* was shown at a special performance for one night and by invitation only on Sunday, 13 December at the Royal Cultural Center. The play, written and directed by Nader Omran, features Mohamad Al Kabbani, Suhair Fahad, Muhtasib Aref, Zeln Ghamma, Amer Al Khuffash and Habis Husseln. Khuloud Al Rashq wrote and arranged the music for *Thebes*, which deals with Arab and world mythology within a visually poetic scenography.

In the play, the city of Thebes is in a state of blindness, imposed by the gods until the return from exile of the sighted Noor Al Ouyon to give the people back their vision. But the story does not end there...we hope to be publishing a detailed critical review of *Thebes* soon in *The Star*.

Al Fawanees Theater group is constantly in search of its own theatrical idiom. In *The Death of Thebes*, first presented at the 5th International University Theater Festival in Casablanca this year, the group brings to a successful artistic conclusion the first decade of Al Fawanees' activity.

● The International Community School (ICS) marked Christmas and the new year festivities with a children's theatrical production. 'Half Way Up the Stairs' was dramatized by Edwina Issa, and musically directed by Steve Golsby.

The play was, as the directors stressed, a tribute to the child's mind, and gathered children from the nursery to the fifth grade in an exciting shared story. In its staged form the story satisfied many artistic standards, both educational and aesthetic, combining fun, amusement, imaginative scenery and beautiful costumes and setting.

After the play, the small, proud actors shared their happiness and excitement with their teachers, friends and parents at the school's premises. Cold and hot drinks were served with sweets and cookies, which were specially prepared for this occasion. V.M.

The Second Jordanian Theater Festival:  
Hopes for raising new theater standards

By Vesna Masharqa

THE PLAY 'Night of the Actress Jim Burrial' was the first production presented at the Second Jordanian Theater Festival, currently being held by the Ministry of Culture and the Jordanian Artists' League.

'Night of the Actress Jim Burrial', directed by Jameel Awad, written by Jamal Abu Hamdan and featuring Juliet Awad is the first contest runner in the festival.

It is a story about the last night of an actress, who commemorates her long acting career and the female characters she played. The protagonist faces deep disappointment over the fact that women have always been subordinate throughout history — expressed by pain, frustration, confusion, unexpressed desires and the search for a lost identity.

The story itself is interesting, original and appealing. It carries the potential for a wonderful theater production, which was unfortunately not exploited.

Although the set design had peculiar elegance and the props

were fitting, fulfilling a variety of different functions, the play failed to satisfy the desired standard of artistic beauty combined with practicality.

The acting potential was insufficient to carry the ambitious pace of the monodramatic theater genre used — already difficult



enough.

The other contest runners in the festival are: 'He left and won't return', written by Abdul Lateef Shamma, director Lateef Bashit; 'The secret of Mawrad', written and directed by Khaled Tariq; and 'Al Aoul Mashal', written by Abdul Lateef Shamma and Mohamad Al Dammur. 'Garbage man', written by Mamdouh Adwan and directed by Hatem Said is also featured.

## Award-winning Streep branches out into comedy

By Bob Thomas

EDITOR'S NOTE: For a decade, Meryl Streep ruled as queen of dramatic movies, winning two Academy Awards (*Kramer vs. Kramer* and *Sophie's Choice*), and a total of nine nominations. Recently she has ventured into comedy with such films as *She-Devil*, and *Postcards from the Edge* and *Defending Your Life*.

With *Death Becomes Her*, Miss Streep attempts her most off-the-wall comedy. She is cast as a resolutely vain actress whose quest for youth produces dire results. She co-stars with Goldie Hawn and Bruce Willis in the film for Robert Zemeckis (*Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, *Back to the Future*).

After graduation from Vassar College, Miss Streep was accepted by Yale's repertory company, earning a master of fine arts. That led to theater and television roles and her film debut as Jane Fonda's society friend in *Julia*.

Bob Thomas: What are the underlying moral principles and Freudian meanings of this film?

Meryl Streep: We don't have to talk about that; that's much too difficult. It's not my department, it's the director's job to talk about what the film means.

Q: Does it have to mean anything, really?

A: No. Interestingly, though, this one does. I like comedies that have sort of a target. This does. It's a great ride on the way to it. I love the way that it skews this whole obsession with image, youth and beauty.

Q: Did Goldie behave herself?

A: No. No. She was always late, and I wasn't, and it made me much more popular with the producers.



Meryl Streep: The queen of dramatic movies is now venturing into comedy

ducers. You think I'm lying. She's a dreamboat, she is my buddy, but she is always late! The real surprise about the film was Bruce. Goldie and I are old friends, and go back a long way, and we were almost going to do the film *Thelma and Louise* and a couple of other things we were trying to get on. So, I know I had never worked with Bruce, or met him, or anything. But he was just a dream. He really was. He came in all ready and willing to be the patsy, and be whipped around. I just really enjoyed it

with him. I think he gets a bad rap.

Q: Do you regret not doing *Thelma and Louise*?

A: No. No. There were a combination of reasons. I think the timing wasn't right. Actually, I got pregnant. That was one of the reasons.

Q: This film was your first experience with the blue-screen, kind of special effects film. Was it an education? Was it bothersome, tedious?

A: It was all of those things. Yes.

terday, when I saw the movie I thought, "Wow! what an exhilarating ride!" You would never know how long it took to assemble all these tiny pieces that so seamlessly rocket past. I'm very impressed. There are effects that Zemeckis told me are in this movie that couldn't have even been done last year. So, it's pretty "out there" innovation wise. I guess that will only be apparent to people in the industry. Me, I don't even know how they did it.

Q: In the film you play with your head on backwards, that's

something they didn't teach you in drama school.  
A: No. It's a very precise kind of art. You are constrained by so many elements. Acting around and through those constraints. I was strapped down to a chair, dressed in blue, so they could erase my body against a blue screen. I just was acting with my face. Before that I had shot the scene walking backwards with a bag on my head. The bag was blue so they could erase my head. They later put the two things together and I had to sort of remember which way I had looked when I was backwards and sort of matched to it. It was really quite a challenge. Like those stories you've heard about the wife having to fly the airplane when she's never been to flight school. It was pretty wild, and it cost millions of dollars every minute that we did it. They got mad at me when I looked in the wrong place.

Q: You're doing comedies. Are dramas in short supply these days?

A: I was supposed to do sort of another project and then I missed that because I was pregnant. I have another drama I'm going to do next. It's just what was around at the moment. I can never expect what is going to be greenlit, or financed, or what people will present. I don't have one of those production companies that manufactures things for me. I have a production company at home. Producing children, so I don't have time to do all that stuff, so I have to rely on whatever the market has to offer.

Q: So far it's been offering very well.

A: Thank you, I appreciate it. ■

## Parties Schedule

HOTEL  
Jerusalem  
INTERNATIONAL

القدس  
السياح

## Christmas Party

AT-AL-ANDALUS HALL  
Thursday 24 - December.

## Christmas Lunch Buffet

AT AL-YARMOUK Restaurant  
25 - 26 - 27 - December.

## Dinner Dance

AT-AL-ANDALUS HALL  
25 - 26 - 27 - 28 December.

## New Year's Eve Parties

- Dinner Dance Party at the ROYAL HALL.  
- Dinner Dance Party at the AT-AL-ANDALUS HALL.  
- Dance to the tunes of Trio Kristin Brand AT AL-KHAIMA BAR and TERRACE.



Merry Christmas



After 'Ghost' and awaiting the release of 'A few good men', Bruce Willis' wife Demi Moore, 29, becomes Scarlett. A mother of two children, Rumen and Scout, she will play Scarlett in the movie sequel of 'Gone with the wind.'

For Reservation Call:  
696541 / 665121

# The Star's TV GUIDE

Programs on  
Jordan  
Television  
from  
26 Dec  
to 1 Jan

## ENGLISH PROGRAM

### SATURDAY

8:30 — America's Funniest Home Videos  
9:00 — Perspective  
9:30 — Saturday Variety Show  
10:20 — News in English  
10:20 — Feature Film, 'Dogs'. Starring George Wyner. A science fiction story about a certain smell that turns domestic dogs into wild beasts.

### SUNDAY

8:30 — Family Matters  
9:10 — National Geographic. Depicting the lives of Zambian monkeys.  
10:00 — News in English  
10:20 — Law and Order

### MONDAY

8:30 — Step By Step  
9:10 — A Fine Romance  
10:00 — News in English  
10:20 — The Dismissal

### TUESDAY

8:30 — The Golden Girls  
9:30 — Made in Heaven  
10:00 — News in English  
10:20 — Feature Film, 'The Misfits'. Starring John Huston, Clark Gable and Marilyn Monroe. This is Monroe's and Gable's last film.

### WEDNESDAY

8:30 — Saved By The Bell  
9:00 — Spot Light

## Top Pop Albums

1. The Bodyguard, Soundtrack, Arista
2. Unplugged, Eric Clapton, Reprise
3. The Predator, Ice Cube, Priority
4. Breathless, Kenny G, Arista
5. Timeless (The Classics), Michael Bolton, Columbia
6. Automatic for the People, REM, Warner Bros.
7. Keep the Faith, Bon Jovi, Mercury
8. Ten, Pearl Jam, Epic
9. Love Deluxe, Sade, Epic
10. Hard on Smooth, Wreckx-N-Effect, MCA



## Top Video Rentals

1. Sister Act, Whoopi Goldberg, Harvey Keitel, Touchstone Home Video
2. Basic Instinct, Michael Douglas, Sharon Stone, Live Home Video
3. Batman Returns, Michael Keaton, Danny DeVito, Warner Home Video
4. Beauty and the Beast, Animated, Walt Disney Home Video
5. The Cutting Edge, D.B. Sweeney, Motra Kelly, MGM/UA Home Video
6. My Cousin Vinny, Joe Pesci, Marisa Tomei, Fox Video
7. Far and Away, Tom Cruise, Nicole Kidman, MCA/Universal Home Video
8. Thunderheart, Val Kilmer, Fred Ward, Columbia Tristar Home Video
9. Allen 3, Sigourney Weaver, Charles Dutton, Fox Video
10. Deep Cover, Larry Fishburne, Jeff Goldblum, Columbia TriStar Home Video

## HOROSCOPE

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

**ARIES** (21 March-19 April): The first part of the week could be hectic. Don't push a friend on a sensitive subject.  
**TAURUS** (20 April-20 May): Friends will be easier to find than lovers the first part of the week. Your luck in love starts getting better!  
**GEMINI** (21 May-20 June): You may feel kind of groggy the first part of the week. Take care you don't get a cold, too.  
**CANCER** (21 June-22 July): Make up a budget for the week. If you can, travel to see a dear friend.  
**LEO** (23 July-22 August): Touch bases with a close friend. You may have to go your separate ways for a while.  
**VIRGO** (23 August-22 October): This should be a good week for you. Getting together with loved ones could be beneficial for your career plans.  
**LIBRA** (23 September-22 October): Monday morning could be fun, if you're with the right person. Take care of a social obligation.  
**SCORPIO** (23 October-21 November): Take it easy Monday morning, you'll gain speed later in the day. By afternoon you should be fine.  
**SAGITTARIUS** (22 November-21 December): You may have a personal matter to take care of at home. It looks like somebody needs you there.  
**CAPRICORN** (22 December-19 January): Although you'll do well all week, some days may be better than others. Monday afternoon through Wednesday should be pretty good.  
**AQUARIUS** (20 January-18 February): Early Monday morning is an excellent time for you to get organized.  
**PISCES** (19 February-20 March): The first part of this week should be pretty good for you. A gathering of friends will generate some good business tips.

## FRENCH PROGRAM

### SAMEDI

6:00 — Les Aventures du Docteur  
6:45 — Envoyé Spécial  
7:00 — News in French  
7:15 — Fenêtre Sur

### DIMANCHE

5:30 — Rêves D'Enfants  
5:40 — Jeux Sans Frontières  
7:00 — News in French  
7:15 — Le Journal de L'Histoire

### LUNDI

6:00 — Pif et Hercule  
6:10 — Papa Poule  
7:00 — News in French  
7:15 — Magazine Sportif

### MARDI

6:00 — Michel Vaillant  
6:30 — La Famille Ramdam  
7:00 — News in French  
7:15 — Variétés

### MERCREDI

6:00 — Les Ateliers du Reve: 'Cent Fleurs Pour La Chine'.  
7:00 — News in French  
7:15 — Variétés

### JEUDI

5:30 — Imogene  
7:00 — News in French  
7:15 — Variétés. A l'occasion du nouvel an 1993.

### VENREDI

5:30 — Variétés. Special nouvel an 1993.  
7:00 — News in French  
7:15 — Variétés

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Meeting the needs of the world's children:

# The 25 billion dollar bargain

**Editor's note:** The following is a summary of the 1993 State of the World's Children Report from UNICEF, which was issued 17 December 1992.

**MEETING THE** needs of all the world's children for adequate nutrition, clean water, basic health care and primary education would cost about \$25 billion a year, according to the 1993 State of the World's Children report from UNICEF. Reaching these goals would save the lives of more than 4 million children each year and help to lower birth rates.

"The suffering of children in particular emergencies, whether in Afghanistan, Somalia or the former Yugoslavia, rightly occupies much of UNICEF's attention at this time," says the organization's Executive Director James P. Grant, "but it should never be forgotten that everyday malnutrition and disease are tragedies on a far greater scale."

"No famine, no flood, no earthquake, no war, has ever claimed the lives of 250,000 children in a single week," says Grant, "yet malnutrition and disease claim that number of child victims every week. And for every child who

is a scandal of which the public is largely unaware.

On average, the governments of the developing world are devoting only about 10 percent of their budgets to directly meeting the basic needs of their peoples. More is still being spent on the military and on debt servicing than on health and education.

Perhaps more surprising still, less than 10 percent of all international aid for development is devoted to directly meeting the basic human needs of the poorest. Total bilateral aid from the Western industrialized nations is now running at approximately \$40 billion a year. That means that only about \$4 billion a year goes to primary health care, water and sanitation, primary education, and family planning — "less than half as much as the aid-giving nations spend each year on sports shoes."



On average, the governments of the developing world are devoting only about 10% of their budgets to meeting the basic needs of their people. More is still being spent on the military and debt servicing than on health and education.

universally available, a service that UNICEF says is as vital for protecting the health of mothers and children as it is for slowing population growth.

## Summit

Following success in reaching the 80 percent immunization target, the 1990 World Summit for Children agreed on a new set of goals for the 1990s. The goals include: Control of the major childhood diseases; a halving of child malnutrition; a one-third reduction in under-five death rates; a halving of maternal mortality rates; safe water and sanitation for all universally available family planning services; and a basic education for every child.

One hundred and thirty nine of the world's presidents and prime ministers have now signed the Summit Declaration announcing these new goals. Detailed plans for achieving them have been drawn up in 54 countries and are nearing completion in 80 more. "But the lesson to be learned from the immunization success," says Grant, "is that political commitments will only be translated into action with the widespread support of politicians, press and public in all countries."

## Sharing the cost

UNICEF is suggesting that two thirds of the \$25 billion total could be met by the developing nations themselves, with the other third coming in aid. In the case of Africa, the proportion of outside help would need to be considerably higher. Even with present resources, says the report, such sums could be made available if 20 percent of all international aid, and 20 percent of government spending in developing countries, were to be allocated to basics like food, water, sanitation, basic health care, primary education and family planning.

So far, more than 30 governments in the developing world have begun the process of finding

THE 1993 STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN REPORT FROM UNICEF SAYS THAT FOR AN EXTRA \$25 BILLION A YEAR IT WOULD NOW BE POSSIBLE TO HALVE CHILD MALNUTRITION IN THE WORLD, CONTROL THE MAJOR CHILDHOOD DISEASES, ERADICATE POLIO, BRING CLEAN WATER TO ALL COMMUNITIES, PROVIDE A BASIC EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN, AND MAKE FAMILY PLANNING AVAILABLE TO ALL COUPLES.

## SIX WAYS TO SPEND \$25 BILLION

MEETING BASIC NEEDS: \$25 BILLION EXTRA A YEAR IS WHAT IT WOULD TAKE TO MEET THE MOST BASIC NEEDS OF ALL THE WORLD'S CHILDREN BY THE END OF THIS DECADE

- SMOKE AND DRINK:** \$25 BILLION IS LESS THAN AMERICA SPENDS ON CIGARETTES EVERY SIX MONTHS AND WESTERN EUROPE SPENDS ON ALCOHOL EVERY THREE MONTHS
- AN AIRPORT FOR HONG KONG:** \$25 BILLION IS A LITTLE MORE THAN THE ESTIMATED COST OF HONG KONG'S NEW AIRPORT
- AID FOR RUSSIA:** \$25 BILLION IS A LITTLE LESS THAN THE 1992 SUPPORT PACKAGE FOR RUSSIA APPLIED TO BY THE GROUP OF 7 RICH NATIONS
- WAR OF WAR:** \$25 BILLION IS ABOUT AS MUCH AS THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN USES SPENDING EVERY SIX MONTHS TO PAY THE WAGES OF ITS SOLDIERS
- A NEW ROAD FOR JAPAN:** \$25 BILLION IS LESS THAN THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN HAS ALLOCATED, IN 1992, TO THE BUILDING OF A NEW ROAD FROM TOKYO TO NIOBE

the funds from within their own budgets. Several rich countries are also reported to be examining their aid budgets to see how assistance could be reallocated.

In an unusual move for a UN body, the UNICEF report calls for a worldwide popular movement in support of this cause. "Nothing less is needed," says Grant, "than a movement that will begin to exert the same kind of pressure on behalf of children as has been brought to bear on behalf of the environment."

The report admits that building such a movement will not be easy. The age-old problems of malnutrition, illiteracy and disease cannot command the same attention as environmental threats like global warming and ozone depletion. "There is something amiss," says Grant, "when a passionate cry goes up over the loss of biodiversity while cold silence greets the unnecessary deaths of 35,000 children each day from malnutrition and disease."

## Symptom and cause

The report argues that targeting particular problems like disease and illiteracy is attacking causes as well as symptoms. "Economic development is undermined when millions of children suffer from poor mental and physical growth;



International aid for basic needs — nutrition, primary health care, water and sanitation, primary education, and family planning — totals about \$4 billion a year. Less than half as much as the aid-giving nations spend each year on sports shoes.

disease and illiteracy help to crush the potential of the poor, and family planning services are unlikely to be accepted where child death rates remain high.

"When little or nothing could be done about this larger-scale tragedy, then neglect was perhaps understandable," says Grant. "But slowly, quietly, and without the world taking very much notice, we have arrived at the point where all this is no longer necessary. It is therefore, no longer acceptable. And to refuse to do what could now be done to combat malnutrition, disease and illiteracy is to tacitly acquiesce in the verdict of a world which says that these children do not matter because they are the children of the poor."



# Le Jourdain

Section française du Star

Portrait

## Gaultier, styliste iconoclaste

Jean-Paul Gaultier a si profondément influencé l'esthétique des années 80 qu'il est difficile de repérer ses traces!

EN 1976, Jean-Paul Gaultier inaugure le prêt-à-porter des années 80. En mélangeant les genres et les matières, en introduisant le skaï, les frêpes et les lycra, en parodiant aussi bien le tailleur Chanel que la concierge parisienne, Jean-Paul Gaultier affirme un style iconoclaste, ironique et fatal. Il sera l'inspiration esthétique de toute la nouvelle vague de créateurs, mode alternative des années 80, qui propose une ligne prêt-à-porter plus accessible au public.

### Antidotes au bon goût

A 14 ans, Jean-Paul crée sur un cahier d'écolier sa première collection. Quatre ans plus tard, en 1970, il rentre chez Pierre Cardin. Mais c'est chez Patou, où il restera de 1971 à 1974, qu'il développe des antidotes au "bon goût" et au luxe indiscret de la bourgeoisie. Maisons de couture et banlieue parisienne, on imagine le choc esthétique.

Fils d'un comptable et d'une secrétaire, c'est sa grand-mère qui fut une de ses principales sources d'inspiration. Ancienne infirmière, elle recevait ses clientes qui venaient se faire masser mais aussi se confier. Jean-Paul dessinait sur son calepin des "avant-après" d'où les femmes sortaient transformées. Sa grand-mère l'avait chargé de ses teintures. Celles-ci étaient bleues, très bleues. Ou roses. Disparaître, sa grand-mère oubliait d'enfiler sa jupe et sortait sous son manteau en combinaison de satinette: un oubli qui sera fécond.

La découverte d'une "machinerie saumon balnéaire, aux incises orthopédiques" va corser l'affaire. Plus tard, nous retrouvons les vêtements sans dessous-dessus, sujets à une déréglimentation furieuse et généralisée. Brisant les formes établies, sa première collection "au Palais de la Découverte" en 1976 présente des robes "à table" en paille tressée. "Bouleversement esthétique et utilisation de matières peu nobles: skaï, nylon, mailles synthétiques. Place à l'esprit "récupérateur".



Collection automne-hiver 1992 de JPG

Collection automne-hiver 1992 de JPG: vieux tissus, tailles trop grandes, façons maladroites de porter le vêtement, mixage des styles. Pour sa collection "High Tech" (1980-81), il emprunte le

**Il se branche sur l'Amérique, qui le fascine, en se liant d'amitié avec Madonna. Il crée les costumes de sa tournée mondiale de 1990. On ne pouvait imaginer pour lui meilleure ambassadrice.**

skai perforé des sièges de voiture et donne une version punk du tailleur Chanel fait dans un tissu de moquette écossaise. A son tour, la collection "dadaïste" (1983), présente des robes "sans vêtements" et les pré-

"Homme objet", sa première collection masculine (1984). Elle sera suivie par la jupe pour homme. Tout est remis en jeu: la polarité féminin-masculin, les frontières entre le beau et le laid, l'élégant et le vulgaire, le distingué et l'ordinaire.

Plus que le prêt-à-porter, Jean-Paul Gaultier ouvre la voie du "prêt-à-zapper", attitude consistant à mélanger les genres pour se constituer une mode à soi. Lui-même n'hésite pas à zapper les stéréotypes en utilisant dans ses défilés des filles choisies dans la rue. Comble du paradoxe: Miss Trémois, mannequin de 72 ans qui défile depuis trois ans pour Gaultier, est la star d'une pub pour la ligne junior du styliste. Stella, 33 ans, 1m70 pour 100 kilos a été la vedette du défilé automne-hiver présenté en avril 1992.

### L'ami de Madonna

Innovateur tous terrains, le créateur aime bricoler à partir de l'actualité musicale et culturelle. Il sort en 1989 un 45 tours intitulé "How to do that" qui mixe des séquences d'une interview accordée à la BBC au rythme sauvage de la House music. La même année, il crée les costumes du film de Peter Greenaway "Le cuisinier, le voleur, sa femme et son amant".

Il se branche sur l'Amérique, qui le fascine, en se liant d'amitié avec Madonna. Il crée les costumes de sa tournée mondiale de 1990. On ne pouvait imaginer pour lui meilleure ambassadrice.

Que nous réserve maintenant Jean-Paul Gaultier qui en s'imprégnant profondément de tout ce qui fait bouger notre époque, montre la voie aux créateurs d'aujourd'hui? Il s'apprête à lancer, au Printemps 1993, une ligne pour adolescents: "Gaultier Jean's". A suivre. ■

Deborah Langer



### Télex... Jordanie

**APPEL** - L'ambassadeur jordanien auprès des Nations Unies à Genève condamne Israël pour violation des droits de l'homme et de la Convention de Genève. Celle-ci exige la protection des populations civiles en temps de guerre ou sous occupation. Sharif Fawwaz a exhorté lundi la communauté internationale à faire pression sur Israël. L'ambassadeur jordanien a exprimé les mêmes requêtes dans une lettre adressée au Comité des droits de l'homme à Genève.

**BUSINESS** - Un groupe de businessmen libanais actuellement en visite en Jordanie projette de créer une compagnie libano-jordanienne. Jack Sarraf, numéro un de l'association des businessmen libanais a rencontré le président et des membres de la Chambre d'Industrie du royaume. Au centre des discussions: les échanges commerciaux entre les deux pays.

**AIDE** - Une équipe médicale de la Jordan Medical Association (JMA) a décollé pour la Croatie. Objectif: augmenter l'aide aux habitants de la Bosnie-Herzégovine. Une cargaison de médicaments recueillie auprès des docteurs de toute la Jordanie devait être acheminée. Une nouvelle mission se rendra en Croatie le mois prochain pour étudier les besoins des habitants de Bosnie-Herzégovine.

**CONFISQUE** - Le Service de la presse et des publications a saisi le deuxième numéro de l'hebdomadaire "Al Ahali Arabic Weekly" selon un communiqué de son rédacteur-en-chef. Selon M. Nimri, cette mesure "menace sérieusement notre capacité à continuer de publier". ■

Reportage

## La fuite des chrétiens de Palestine

Pris entre le marteau israélien et l'enclume islamiste, de plus en plus de chrétiens palestiniens choisissent l'exode. En dehors de l'émigration, point de salut?

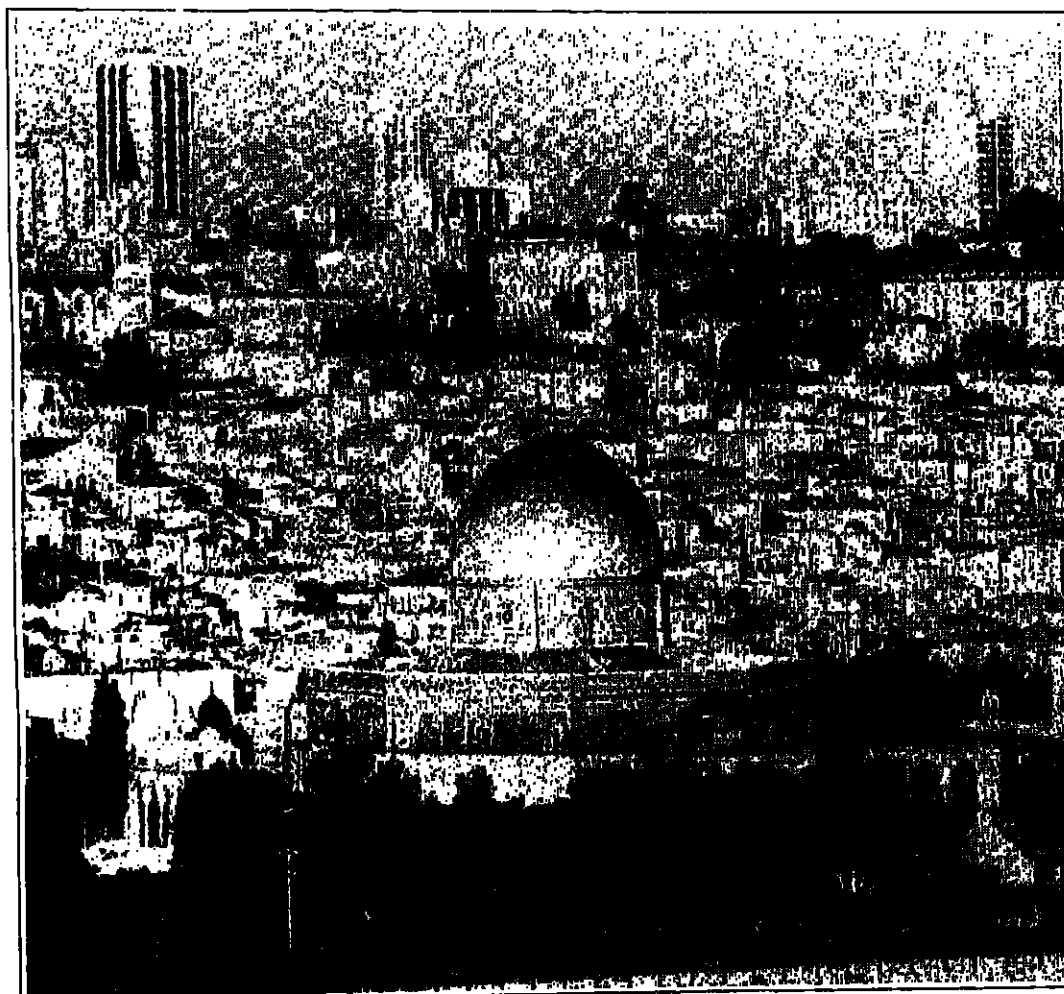
**BERCEAU** DU christianisme, la Terre sainte est en passe de devenir un "vaste musée pour pèlerins", selon l'expression de l'archevêque de Cantorbury à l'issue d'une récente visite dans la région.

Divisés entre une multitude d'Eglises, soumis à des pressions multiformes, les descendants des premières communautés chrétiennes vivent mal leur statut de minorité, face au judaïsme ou à l'islam, et un nombre croissant choisit d'émigrer. Quelques chiffres: en 1948, date de la création d'Israël, Béthléem comptait 30% de musulmans et 70% de chrétiens, aujourd'hui la proportion est exactement inverse. Jérusalem n'abrite plus que 10 à 12.000 chrétiens contre 25.000, il y a quarante ans. Et ces cas d'un véritable dépeuplement, on les retrouve à Ramallah, à Nazareth en Cisjordanie occupée, mais aussi sur l'autre rive du Jourdain (à Madaba et Kérak notamment) où les droits des chrétiens sont pourtant reconnus et garantis par la constitution du Royaume hachémite. La Jordanie ne regroupe plus que 100 à 120.000 chrétiens contre 260.000 il y a quinze ans.

### "Restez sur votre terre"

Cette émigration des chrétiens d'Orient n'est certes pas nouvelle. Au 19ème siècle déjà, de nombreux chrétiens ont quitté leur terre pauvre et aride pour aller vivre aux Etats-Unis ou en Amérique du sud. Quelques-uns d'ailleurs, une fois fortune faite, sont revenus. Mais aujourd'hui, l'ampleur de cette émigration des chrétiens, surtout en Palestine, inquiète les autorités spirituelles. En 1991, le patriarche latin de Jérusalem, Mgr Michel Sabbagh, premier patriarche arabe, lançait ce cri d'alarme: "Au cours de ces derniers temps, le désir des chrétiens de quitter le pays s'est manifesté de manière alarmante (...). A vous tous, nous lançons cet appel: restez dans votre patrie, sur votre terre et dans votre Eglise".

Les causes de cet exode sont multiples. Récession économique, avenir bouché du fait de la persistance de l'occupation israélienne, impossibilité de la conversion, montée du fondamentalisme musulman... Selon les résultats d'une enquête effectuée par Michel Sabella, professeur à l'université de Béthléem, c'est le marasme économique dans lequel sont plongés les Palestiniens des territoires qui les pousse à partir, bien plus que le regain d'activité des intégristes musulmans qui n'est cité que comme une raison marginale à leur départ. Près d'un tiers des familles chrétiennes de Cisjordanie interrogées ont l'intention de quitter leur terre, souvent encore pour les Etats-Unis, mais de plus en plus pour le Canada et l'Australie, pays où les portes s'ouvrent plus facilement. Et ce sont surtout les jeunes qui partent, les plus diplômés, les mieux armés pour affronter la concurrence, ceux dont les parents entrevoient pour



Jérusalem n'abrite plus que 10 à 12.000 chrétiens contre 25.000 il y a 40 ans

aux une vie meilleure que celle qui a été la leur depuis trois ou quatre décennies. D'od le risque à terme d'un appauvrissement social de la population chrétienne en Palestine, si le mouvement n'est pas enrayé.

### Israël amnésique

Sujet extrêmement sensible, l'émigration des chrétiens est l'objet d'une vive controverse en Israël. Pour l'Etat hébreu, la présence chrétienne s'est renforcée depuis 1948, et lorsqu'il y a émigration, ce n'est pas de son fait (voyez au Liban ce qui se passe vous dit-on malicieusement), mais bien plus en raison de l'intégrisme islamique et des mauvaises conditions de vie que les Palestiniens se sont infligées en déclenchant l'intifada en décembre 1987. Habile à jouer sur plusieurs fronts, les autorités israéliennes oublient de citer les nombreuses pressions voire menaces exercées plus ou moins insidieusement contre la population chrétienne, qu'il s'agisse de discriminations contre les autorités ecclésiastiques, des exactions de certains lieux saints, sans compter les crachats, vols et autres lapidations dont sont victimes pèlerins ou habitants de la vieille ville de Jérusalem.

Pour les Palestiniens, au contraire, c'est bien l'occupation avec son cortège de privations de libertés et de menaces permanentes qui est le facteur explicatif de cette émigration, et seule la paix, via la création d'un Etat palestinien,

peut apporter un répit à cet exode.

Les chrétiens des Territoires occupés (80.000 sur 1,7 million), voire ceux d'Israël, sont d'abord Arabes, donc palestiniens et intimement liés à cette cause. L'intifada leur a fait découvrir la profondeur de leurs racines et ils sont largement engagés dans le combat nationaliste. Les exemples de chrétiens occupant des postes de responsabilité dans la mouvance palestinienne sont nombreux: des principaux ambassadeurs de l'OLP dans les capitales européennes, en passant par les nombreux collaborateurs de Yasser Arafat au siège de la centrale à Tunis, la porte-parole de la délégation palestinienne aux pourparlers de paix, Hanan Achroui, jusqu'aux dirigeants des Fronts Populaire et Démocratique de Libération de la Palestine, Georges Habache et Nayef Hawatmeh. Leur influence est incontestablement supérieure à leur poids numérique parmi la population palestinienne. Résultat d'une position sociale souvent meilleure que les musulmans dans leur ensemble et d'un rassemblement près des centres urbains de Jérusalem, Ramallah et Béthléem. Certes, mais cet engagement des chrétiens dans le nationalisme palestinien - à l'image des chrétiens égyptiens et syriens - y a quelques décennies dans le nationalisme arabe - est aussi pour eux le moyen de dépasser leur statut de minorité, de prouver en quelque sorte leur arabeité. Ce faisant, et bien involontairement, ils

resserment encore un peu plus l'eau, pris qu'ils sont entre le marteau israélien qui leur reproche de verser dans la surenchère nationaliste et l'enclume islamiste qui les considère comme des "incroyants". D'où cette frustration, qui confine d'ailleurs parfois à une certaine paranoïa, que l'intégration des chrétiens dans cette région est finalement impossible et qu'en dehors de l'émigration point de salut.

La division des Eglises et l'animosité qui marque encore leurs relations au sommet ajoute encore à ce malaise. Que dire alors du rapprochement entamé l'été dernier entre le Vatican et Jérusalem? Le dialogue qui a commencé - avec sans doute à terme une reconnaissance diplomatique d'Israël par Rome - inquiète la population chrétienne des territoires, comme sans doute celle de la plupart des pays arabes. Pourquoi aller si vite, se demande-t-on? Alors que l'islamisme gonfle un peu partout ses voiles, on craint les suspensions qu'une telle démarche ne manquera pas de susciter chez certaines franges extrémistes.

Même si l'immense majorité des musulmans souhaite préserver ce trait d'union entre juifs et eux-mêmes qu'a souvent été au cours de l'histoire la présence chrétienne, le risque est grand de voir celle-ci se limiter dans un siècle à l'office de quelques ecclésiastiques servant une poignée de fidèles. Faute d'une paix durable sur cette Terre sainte. ■

Philippe Louyan

### L'EDITO

De Amine Cbabloul

### La politique du gros dos

EN REFUSANT de rejeter la décision gouvernementale d'expulser plus de 400 Palestiniens, la "Cour suprême" israélienne aura du mal à se défendre de sa réputation: elle passe pour une pure et simple chambre d'enregistrement des décisions militaires. Certes, le dossier des déportés reste ouvert, le verdict définitif devrait tomber dans un mois.

A quoi cela servira-t-il? Peut-être à pousser les Libanais à accueillir ces expulsés abandonnés dans les conditions les plus impropres.

Ce chantage mesquin des Israéliens démontre à nouveau l'aspect aléatoire de cet "oasis démocratique" dans le désert proche-oriental. Comment définir un pays qui prétend détenir la vérité démocratique absolue et qui procède en même temps au "transfert des populations, à la modification de la structure démographique"? Bref un nettoyage ethnique ou carrément l'apartheid selon la formule Sharon.

L'inquiétant dans cette affaire, c'est qu'elle a lieu à la fin de deux rounds de négociations de paix, ceux-ci ayant été pour le moins infructueux.

La responsabilité incombe à Israël. L'Etat hébreu, craignant l'aboutissement du processus de paix, se recroqueville et choisit la politique du "gros dos". Israël essaie des tira vaient de toutes parts, y compris de ses alliés inconditionnels.

La condamnation sans appel du Conseil de sécurité en est la preuve. Elle a ouvert la voie à Washington, Paris comme à Londres... Ces capitales craignent que ces agissements ne compromettent un processus de paix déjà chancelant.

Israël s'est donné un mois de répit. L'Etat hébreu finira par céder, mais un mois après, comme pour éviter le chaos, comme si perdre aux points, allait transformer la défaite en victoire. ■



